

**Advisory Commission
Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind
September 18, 2007
9 a.m. – 11 a.m.**

Summary of Meeting

Members Present: Senator Emmett Hanger, Delegate Matthew Lohr, Jr., Delegate Chris Saxman, Delegate Lionell Spruill, Mr. Ralph Shellman and parent representative Ms. Maureen Hollowell

Others Present: Billy K. Cannaday, Jr. Superintendent of Public Instruction
H. Douglas Cox, Assistant Superintendent
Karen Trump, Director of State Operated Programs, DOE
Phyllise Wilkins, Superintendent VSDBM-H
Nancy Armstrong, Superintendent VSDB-S

Members Absent: Mamye E. BaCote, Robert B. Bell, Senator Harry B. Blevins, Mark Emblidge, Board of Education, Senator Mamie E. Locke, Delegate Jeion A. Ward

Opening Remarks:

Senator Emmett Hanger opened the meeting with an explanation of the meeting to receive an update from the Superintendent of Public Instruction in order to determine legislative actions needed in the upcoming session of the General Assembly. Commission members then introduced themselves. Senator Hanger requested to have the minutes from the last meeting and the agenda approved. The motions were put forth, properly seconded and the minutes and agenda were approved.

Update of Superintendent of Public Instruction Activities

Billy K. Cannaday, Jr., Superintendent of Public Instruction updated the Advisory Commission on the activities he has initiated to date to address required directives.

- Orientation with Superintendent's Region II group (November 15, 2006).
- Met with Superintendent's Region II group (December 6, 2007).
- Hired consultant for Region II (John McLaughlin) who initiated the Transition Task Force for VSDBM-H Regional Day Program and conducted personal interviews of all families. Special education administrators from the Hampton Roads area were also interviewed.
- Received an update from Dr. McLaughlin (April 16, 2007).
- Received an update from Department of General Services (April 17, 2007).
- Presentation to House Appropriations Committee (May 21, 2007).
- Met with Senator Emmett Hanger (June 14, 2007).
- Received an update from Dr. McLaughlin (June 14, 2007).
- Conducted community meetings in Staunton and Hampton to present the work completed for the Staunton site (June 18 and June 19, 2007). Report posted at www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/ssop/vsdb_project_status.pdf.

- Met with Delegates and Senators in the Hampton Roads area to update (June 27, 2007).
- Conference call with Superintendent's Region II group (August 23, 2007).
- Historical Assessment for Hampton campus in progress.

Dr. Cannaday expressed his intent that staff working at the Hampton school receive definitive information as quickly as possible and that his goal was to have closure for them by January, 2008.

Transition Task Force for the VSDBM-H Regional Day Program

Douglas Cox reported on the Transition Task Force for the VSDBM-H Regional Day Program. Dr. McLaughlin, consultant for the Task Force participated via telephone conference call. Mr. Cox shared that in addition to the Task Force activities, all students' Individualized Education Programs (IEP) will be reviewed over the next six weeks to determine which students and families will opt for services through the regional day program, the consolidated program at Staunton or to return to their services and programs in the placing school division. Dr. McLaughlin reported the following his findings:

- parents desire that nothing be lost in their child's services through the program change
- students should receive periodic explanations about the upcoming change
- clear messages are needed through multiple vehicles about the changes
- recommendation that regional services continue to emphasize a "life-skills" orientation
- year round and extended day services should be considered
- choice for parents is critical
- support for relocation of staff should be included in transition activities
- the historical aspect of the campus should be preserved

He emphasized that local superintendents were clear that the placement of school division programs on the campus was dependent on support for needed facility improvements. Also, Mr. David Young and Mr. Ralph Shellman were identified as liaisons to the DOE with regard to finalizing a plan of action.

Mr. Cox shared that the DOE staff will be meeting with the New Horizon's Regional Program Board meeting to determine whether the Board would envision utilizing the VSDBM-H campus for the regional program, and if so, under what conditions. He introduced Mr. James Chapman of CEGG Associates to share information about the facilities assessment of the Hampton campus for repairs. Mr. Chapman provided an overview of how the assessment was conducted, provided a brief executive summary and list of costs by building to the group. A synopsis of total costs is listed below:

- Campus-wide architectural upgrades = \$ 7,119,464.00
- Campus-wide mechanical upgrades = \$ 4,477,766.00
- Campus-wide electrical upgrades = \$ 6,305,600.00
- Total:** \$ 17,902,830.00

*Mr. Chapman reported that figures require a 6% escalation cost adjustment per year.

Community Meetings of June 18 (Hampton) & 19 (Staunton)

Dr. Trump reported that two community meetings were held in June, 2007 to share with the communities the work completed to date with regard to the directives in the 2007 Appropriation Act. The presentation used at the community meetings, *VSDB Project Status Report, June 2007* is posted on the DOE web page at www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/ssop/vsdb_project_status.pdf.

Update on the Consolidation Project

Dr. Trump reported that the work on the consolidated program at Staunton was completed to the required 20% level. In May 2007, the Board of Education took action, per the Acts of Assembly, 2007, to change the project from PPEA to a conventional design contract and a construction manager at risk contract. The new Architectural and Engineering firm selected is Ballou, Justice, Upton and the construction manager at risk firm is Kjellstrom & Lee.

Update from the Superintendents

VSDB-Staunton

Enrollment is 113 students. They continue to have a strong sports program. Dr. Armstrong is concerned about how to explain the upcoming transition to parents and students. She described budget cuts and their impact on the program. There is a waiting list of 8 students. She spoke of the need for the school to serve Deaf/ED students and the population of students with Autism in addition to their sensory impairment.

VSDBM-H

Enrollment is 40 students. The administration is working with teachers on implementation of the VAAP. They have no maintenance reserved funds after replacing and repairing the HVAC system in Palmer last year. They recently established a museum for the school. They are planning to participate in a ceremony in October for a historical marker in collaboration with former Delegate Mary Christian and the Coalition to Preserve the VSDBM at Hampton.

Discussion and Next Steps

Senator Hanger indicated that another meeting should be called to discuss the results of the work the New Horizons Regional Program Board prior to the convening of the 2008 General Assembly.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.